



SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION CENTER  
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Friday, April 8, 2005

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## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL SECURITY: WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

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**Treasury Department Welcomes 26 Programs, 30 Administration Officials To Radio Day:** "Live, from the historic Cash Room of the magnolia-framed Treasury Building in Washington, it's 'Mickelson in the Morning,' booming throughout Iowa and beyond on the 50,000-watt clear-channel voice of WHO. ... The Bush administration has assembled local broadcasters on the red Lisbon and Italian Carrara marble floor of this Cash Room that actually served as a bank for 'the transaction of the government's financial business' when it opened in 1869. On Wednesday, it was an electronic trading floor for a concerted White House media campaign to convince Americans of the merits of Bush's program for Social Security." (Mark Silva, "Tough Sell from Cash Room," *The Chicago Tribune*, 4/7/05) [Read the article.](#)

**Secretary Snow Talks Social Security In 17 Radio Interviews:** "U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow took to the airwaves on Wednesday ... 'It served us well, but unfortunately that safety net is frayed,' Snow said of the government-run retirement system. Bush is more than halfway through a 60-day U.S. tour to press his argument that the Social Security system must be put on a sounder financial footing to cope with an aging populace. ... Snow voiced confidence that Congress would tackle the proposals ... 'I fully expect that will produce good legislation here later this year that will lead to a signing ceremony with the president in the fall.'" (Alister Bull, Reuters, "Snow Rides Radio Waves to Alter Social Security," 4/6/05) [Read the story.](#)

**In West Virginia, President Bush Visits The Bureau Of Public Debt:** "[A] lot of people in America think there's a trust, in this sense -- that we take your money through payroll taxes and then we hold it for you, and then when you retire, we give it back to you. But that's not the way it works. There is no 'trust fund,' just IOUs that I saw firsthand, that future generations will pay -- will pay for either in higher taxes, or reduced benefits, or cuts to other critical government programs. The office here in Parkersburg stores those IOUs. They're stacked in a filing cabinet. Imagine -- the retirement security for future generations is sitting in a filing cabinet. It's time to strengthen and modernize Social Security for future generations with growing assets that you can control, that you call your own -- assets that the government cannot take away." [Read a transcript of the President's remarks.](#) [Watch the video.](#)

**Bush Finds West Virginians Ready To Listen:** "Barbara Travis is worried. A grandmother of 13, Harris is concerned that Social Security will not exist to support her grandchildren when they enter their golden years. Looking for answers, the retired 57 year-old came to West Virginia University at Parkersburg Tuesday to listen to a speech by President George Bush. ... 'I see no solution on the table from anyone else,' Harris said. 'He is the only one who is at least trying to fix it.' ... Vera Kordella of Parkersburg brought her 18-year-old daughter, Bethany, to the speech. Kordella said she was encouraged by the president's plan and believes it could help her daughter and future grandchildren. 'I think the plan speaks to every age group,' Kordella said. 'The fact that you can control your own money is something I think people can agree with.'" (Matthew Thompson, "Bush finds Wood residents willing to listen," *Charleston Daily Mail*, 4/6/05) [Read the whole article.](#)

**Personal Accounts Are An Important Part Of The Solution:** "Personal accounts needs to be part of the solution, it's not the entire solution for Social Security, but in a way in provides a balance to enable younger workers to earn a superior return on their investments. ... Because it is your money, if you pass away the money is yours. It will be passed to your heirs and you have an interest in how the market and the economy performs," Treasury Assistant Secretary Mark Warshawsky told West Virginia's Hoppy Kercheval at Strengthening Social Security Radio Day. [Read a recap on West Virginia Metro News Talkline.](#) [Listen to the interview online.](#)

**Opinion: Bush's Plan Will Save Social Security From Disaster:** "Social Security is a 'pay-as-you-go system.' ... This law has made it possible for Congress to spend way in excess of revenues collected, on anything from corporate welfare to pork barrel projects. The Social Security surplus acts as their slush fund. If not for the surplus, our budget deficit would be even larger than it is. ... Enter the proposal to allow younger workers, under age 55, to divert a portion of their FICA taxes into personal accounts. These accounts would be their private property, invested as they saw fit, within strict guidelines to ensure their solvency. President Bush is promoting this idea, but many leaders have suggested it in earlier years - Democratic Sens. Joe Lieberman, Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Bob Kerrey in the 1990s, as well as Arizona's Sen. Barry Goldwater decades ago.

Former President Clinton thought the idea merited consideration in the mid-'90s. The proposal helps the Trust Fund with its impending Armageddon, to some extent, by decreasing the amount of money the Social Security Administration otherwise would have to pay out to these younger workers when they retire." (Op-ed, Jeffrey A. Singer, "Bush's Plan Will Save Social Security From Disaster," *Tucson Citizen*, 4/6/05) [Read the whole column.](#)

**Editorial: Social Security Realities For Now:** "Annual cash-flow surpluses are expected to end in 2016, after which beneficiary payments...are projected to exceed payroll-tax income. The federal government will have to finance those cash-flow deficits by either increasing the budget deficit through more borrowing; or by raising payroll- and/or general- (e.g., income-) tax revenues; or by reducing spending on other programs; or by pursuing a combination of these options. Measured in constant 2005 dollars, Social Security cash-flow deficits, once they begin to occur, will rise quickly, exceeding \$100 billion in 2022, \$200 billion in 2027 and \$300 billion in 2034. Thus, the crisis is real." (Editorial, "Social Security Realities For Now," *The Washington Times*, 4/5/05) [Read the editorial.](#)

**Rep. Kevin Brady (R-TX) Gets Feedback On Social Security:** "I've learned that through the workshops,' Brady said Thursday following his workshop at the Rivershire subdivision clubhouse. 'People want to make certain personal accounts are secure over the long haul.' ... Brady believes time is running out on a long-term solution. That's why he told the audience of about 30 persons that he would begin putting together a plan next week. Brady said every year a solution on Social Security is delayed, another \$600 billion is added to impending deficit. 'If you know the roof is leaking, why wait until it collapses?' was his rhetorical question to the audience." (Howard Roden, "Brady Gets Feedback On Social Security," *The Courier (Houston, TX)*, 4/3/05) [Read the whole article.](#)

**Director of the President's National Economic Council Allan Hubbard Outlines Principles Of Social Security Reform:** "A growing number of Americans, now more than two-thirds, recognize the challenges Social Security faces and the need to act now to fix the system permanently for our children and grandchildren. The system faces an \$11.1 trillion shortfall, and every year we wait to act adds \$600 billion to the cost of fixing it. President Bush has called for a comprehensive solution and believes voluntary personal retirement accounts should be part of the answer." (Allan Hubbard, "Voluntary, Secure, Solvent," *The Wall Street Journal*, 4/6/05) [Read the whole column \(subscription required\).](#)

**Opting Out Of Social Security For Personal Accounts Is Already Working In Texas:** "Can personal retirement accounts provide retirement security without risk? For 24 years, three Texas counties have been a living lab for President Bush's proposal, and so far the experiment is working. ... In 24 years, no one has lost a single dime. The plan was presented to the more than 2,000 employees of Galveston County, and in 1981 they voted 72% to 28% to leave Social Security and move to pre-funded personally owned accounts. ... The 5,000 or so government employees in the three Texas counties who opted out of Social Security are among the more than 5 million employees of state and local governments who opted out or, as in Massachusetts and Ohio, never joined up at all." (Editorial, "Houston, we have a solution," *Investors Business Daily*, 4/7/04) [Read the whole article.](#)

**Changing Demographics Call For Strengthening Social Security:** "The increasing life span of Americans and the shrinkage of the workforce relative to the number of retirees are real and significant demographic changes that policymakers should not ignore. Changes could be made in Social Security that would extend its life and adapt to the altered economic and social realities of the 21st century. And those changes can be more gradual and less disruptive if they take place soon." (David S. Broder, "Fix Health Care First," *The Washington Post*, 4/7/05) [Read the whole column.](#)

**Opinion: Why Is Social Security Sacrosanct?:** "This is not to argue for or against President Bush's plans to have people put part of their Social Security taxes into private accounts. But one striking aspect of this furor is how badly freedom frightens many people. The idea that government should permit you to redirect (much less keep) some of your own money, that you might take responsibility for your future, causes palpitations. ... That's privatization? Putting a fraction of your Social Security taxes into a government-run fund? Heaven forbid. We've all heard the numbers - 42 workers per retiree at the end of World War II, but only 3.3 now. We've heard how the surplus will be gone in 2018 and the trust fund runs out in 2042, if nothing is done. ... Social Security will turn 70 on Aug. 14. Ask yourself, what else from 1935 works so well we dare not change it? Airplanes? Office systems? Civil rights? Cars?" (Op-ed, Bill Cotterell, "Why Is Social Security Sacrosanct," *Tallahassee Democrat*, 4/7/05) [Read the whole column.](#)